



DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Rethinking CRM for Law Firms

Why Law Firms Need to Adjust Their CRM Strategy to Increase ROI

Global law firms find themselves at a crossroads. The traditional silos of business development (BD), client onboarding, risk management, and matter management are no longer sustainable in a world that demands efficiency to drive strategic growth. Change is already happening, thanks to new AI-powered technologies. While firms scramble to implement the latest AI tools, it's easy for leaders to overlook something far more fundamental: the bigger picture of their client relationship management (CRM) and how technology can create synergies across the entire client lifecycle.

The CRM Dilemma at Law Firms



The full potential of modern CRM platforms has historically been overlooked by law firms, despite these tools' proven ability to support revenue growth with advanced marketing and BD capabilities. Having engaged with numerous law firm leaders over the past year, Alvarez & Marsal has uncovered a clear theme in CRM: despite significant investment, many firms are not realizing the expected return on investment (ROI). This is because inefficiencies and outdated approaches are limiting CRM systems' ability to advance business objectives and deliver the impact needed to fuel future growth.

This has left law firms questioning: How will my firm realize value from our investment in a CRM platform when so many competing firms express dissatisfaction with their own programs?

To answer this, we first need to understand common CRM challenges faced by law firms.

If these challenges are not addressed, even the most sophisticated CRM platforms will fail to deliver ROI and become expensive administrative burdens, rather than creating a competitive advantage and driving sustainable growth.

CRM challenges faced by law firms:

1 Isolated systems prevent the ability to cross-sell:

Many law firms have implemented standalone CRM systems principally as a "marketing tool," which leads to fragmented processes across marketing, BD, and client onboarding. When teams operate in disparate systems, firms miss out on lucrative cross-selling opportunities. For example, a partner closing a major M&A deal might never connect with the firm's tax or employment teams, who therefore miss out opportunities to provide additional services to the same client.

2 Low user adoption kills pipeline visibility:

Despite substantial investment in technology, partner resistance to enterprise CRM creates blind spots in the pipeline and revenue forecasts. When rainmakers bypass the system, leaders lose critical intelligence about live opportunities, which in turn allows winnable business to slip away undetected to competitors.

3 Poor data quality wastes BD resources:

Outdated contact information and incomplete relationship mapping result in teams chasing dead leads while real prospects fall by the wayside, waiting for outreach or follow-up. Major marketing dollars are wasted on contacts who have changed roles, and valuable time is also wasted preparing pitches for the wrong decision-makers.

What are the Benefits of Modernizing CRM?



A well-designed CRM should be an accelerator for firms, allowing them to identify new business opportunities and drive revenue growth. Done right, a modernized CRM provides benefits to law firm leaders and partners. As such, it's important to consider the following objectives when implementing a CRM system.



Build Stronger Client Relationships

By accessing relationship maps and a complete view of client history, you can make every interaction personal and informed. This allows partners to engage more strategically, provide personalized outreach to clients, and strengthen trust.



Win More Deals Over Competitors

By tracking prospective interactions and proposals, you will gain an understanding of how BD teams and partners are successfully closing deals. You don't want to lose a pitch simply because critical relationship details or lessons learned from past pursuits were overlooked.



Don't Leave Money on the Table

Existing clients often need additional services based on changes to their business, matter history, and industry trends—these are natural opportunities to introduce clients to other practice areas and partners. Doing so represents an easy win, helping to generate revenue that would otherwise go to competitors.



Grow Your Practice

Tracking which BD activities generate profitable new business will allow partners to focus their valuable time on referral sources that deliver results. By surfacing insights (e.g., white space across key accounts) you will also spot new opportunities for sustainable growth.



Work Smarter, Serve Better

In an increasingly busy professional landscape, it is essential to eliminate time-wasting activities, such as searching for client information or recreating relationship history. Streamlining CRM tasks frees up partner time to focus on high-value client work.





How Can A&M Help?



While it becomes increasingly important to empower law firm staff with the latest AI technology, this empowerment must be supported by baseline CRM knowledge and capability.

Managing partners and executives must confirm that CRM applications are properly implemented to support the firm's workforce and BD processes. The data captured, generated, and stored across the firm's suite of enterprise applications, including CRM, should then fuel internal chatbots, agents, and other AI solutions, which can dramatically improve workforce efficiency and effectiveness.

A&M has proven expertise in this field, helping firms cut through complexity with a structured approach that accelerates user adoption, simplifies the overall data strategy, and delivers business value. We seek to align marketing, BD, client intake, and risk management technologies to streamline client lifecycle processes and accelerate revenue growth.

Our structured approach encompasses the following core principles:



Assess Current Maturity

By evaluating your existing processes, including marketing, BD, and client intake, we baseline the current state and develop an actionable plan to enhance CRM at your firm.



Streamline Workflows with Advanced Integrations

We identify opportunities to connect CRM with your firm's risk and compliance, and practice management systems, to increase efficiency and help you use CRM as an accelerator across functions.



Implement User-Friendly Interfaces

Simplifying the user experience (UX) of a CRM solution promotes adoption and positive ROI of your system, so we look to design and implement the most user-friendly interfaces possible.



Design for Scalability and Security

We align business and technology teams to take a security-by-design approach and push for simple solutions that satisfy business needs, allowing your CRM to scale with firm growth.



Develop Key Metrics

We define outcome-focused measures such as lead conversion rates, opportunity origination, and time to onboard. These metrics enable data-driven decision making and help you determine where to invest valuable BD resources.



Conclusion



CRM at law firms must go beyond managing contact lists or sending marketing emails. To realize their full potential, modern CRM platforms must seamlessly integrate with core systems such as client intake, practice management, and document management systems. This interconnected technology ecosystem breaks down silos and streamlines client lifecycle workflows. It also empowers partners and their teams to close more deals, strengthen client relationships, and drive growth while reducing the administrative burden on legal professionals.

However, technology is only one piece of the puzzle: successful CRM programs must also drive adoption through business transformation to deliver meaningful results. Our team at A&M is well positioned to help law firms navigate both technology and business changes needed to maximize value from their CRM platforms. We take a practical, results-oriented approach that turns CRM strategy into solutions that position law firms for sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive industry.

If your law firm is ready to elevate its CRM program, we welcome the opportunity to partner with you.

To find out more about CRM value acceleration for your firm, please reach out to the authors.

CONTACT US



Mike Shanahan

Managing Director

mshanahan@alvarezandmarsal.com



Pete Koltis

Managing Director

petekoltis@alvarezandmarsal.com



Anthony Santomauro

Director

asantomauro@alvarezandmarsal.com

ABOUT ALVAREZ & MARSAL

Founded in 1983, Alvarez & Marsal is a leading global professional services firm. Renowned for its leadership, action and results, Alvarez & Marsal provides advisory, business performance improvement and turnaround management services, delivering practical solutions to address clients' unique challenges. With a world-wide network of experienced operators, world-class consultants, former regulators and industry authorities, Alvarez & Marsal helps corporates, boards, private equity firms, law firms and government agencies drive transformation, mitigate risk and unlock value at every stage of growth.

To learn more, visit: [AlvarezandMarsal.com](https://www.alvarezandmarsal.com)

Follow A&M on:

© Copyright 2025 Alvarez & Marsal Holdings, LLC.
All Rights Reserved.
473437-53418/September 25
9826_Stg05